

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EURE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3061

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E. O. 11652: DECONTROL AFTER APRIL 17, 1974

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: TWO DIE IN BURNING OF MSI LEADER' S HOME

REF: ROME 2947

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE DEATH BY ARSON OF TWO SONS OF A MINOR MSI OFFICIAL IN ROME HAD CREATED PROFOUND SHOCK THROUGHOUT ITALY. AS A CONSEQUENCE, " ANTI- FASCIST" OUTRAGE AT THE KILLING OF A POLICEMAN BY RIGHTISTS IN MILAN LAST WEEK IS BEING REDIRECTED AGAINST SOURCES OF VIOLENCE ON BOTH FAR- RIGHT AND FAR- LEFT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN EARLY MORING HOURS APRIL 16 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SET FIRE TO SMALL APARTMENT OF LOW- LEVEL MSI LEADER IN ROME WORKING CLASS SUBURB, KILLING HIS 22 AND 8 YEAR OLD SONS AND GRAVELY INJURING OTHER SIX MEMBERS OF FAMILY. FATHER OF VICTIMS HEADED NEIGHBORHOOD MSI SECTION, WHILE ELDEST OF DEAD WAS HIMSELF MSI MEMBER. PLACARD LEFT ON DOOR DECLARED ATTACK WAS ACT OF " PROLETARIAN JUSTICE". HOWEVER, THERE IS NOT DIRECT EVIDENCE TO LINK ATTACK TO APRIL 12 KILLING OF POLICEMAN IN MILAN BY FAR- RIGHTISTS (FOR WHICH TWO ARRESTS HAVE NOW BEEN MADE).

3. ROME DEATHS HAVE RECEIVED BANNER TREATMENT IN NATIONWIDE PRESS, AND HAVE BEEN UNIVERSALLY CONDEMNED, WITH POPE PAUL XI, PRESIDENT LEONE, MINISTER OF INTERIOR RUMOR, AND LEADERS OF VIRTUALLY ALL PARTIES EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO STILL- HOSPITALIZED

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PARENTS OF TWO YOUNG VICTIMS. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS UNUSUALLY EVEN- HANDED CGIL- CISL- UIL STATEMENT WHICH CONDEMNS " FASCIST VIOLENCE WHICH CAUSED DEATH OF A YOUNG PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICER", IN MILAN, BUT ASSERTS WITH EQUAL VIGOR " THE REBELLION OF POLITICAL AND CIVIL CONSCIENCE OF ALL ITALIAN WORKERS" AGAINST ROME ARSON DEATHS. IN SIMILAR VEIN, SOCIALIST PARTY VICE SECRETARY MOSCA DENOUNCED BROADLY ALL " THEORIES WHICH ORIGINATE AND GROUPS WHICH ORGANIZE AND FIANCE VIOLENCE", WITH " CLEAR PURPOSE OF DESTROYING CONFIDENCE IN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM".

4. COMMENT ROME TRAGEDY HAS TAKEN MUCH OF PUNCH FROM ANTI-FASCIST REACTION TO KILLING OF POLICEMAN BY FAR- RIGHTISTS IN MILAN LAST WEEK. UNANIMOUS OUTRAGE EXPRESSED BY BOTH MAJORITY AND LEFT- OPOSITION FORCES TO FIRST EVENT HAS NOW SHIFTED INTO BROAD CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE IN GENERAL, FROM WHATEVER SOURCE. MANY OF THOSE IN PSI AND DC LEFT WHO HERETOFORE HAVE REJECTED " THEORY OF OPPOSITE EXTREMES" (COLLECTIVE CONDEMNATION OF BOTH FAR- RIGHT AND FAR- LEFT EXTREMISTS), FIND THEMSELVES PROPELLED BY THIS EVENT TO SPEAK IN TERMS CONSISTENT WITH THIS THESIS. WHILE BOTH THESE THIGHLY PUBLICIZED CROMES UNDOUBTEDLY AGGRAVATE PUBLIC CONCERN OVER " LAW AND ORDER", THEY HAVE NOT THUS FAR PROMPTED ANY SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS SHOWN ITS SOLIDARITY WITH NEGATIVE REACTIONS OF PUBLIC AND PROMISED MAXIMUM EFFORTS TO BRING CULPRITS TO JUSTICE. BEAUDRY

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